



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 14, 2009

MAYOR JERRY SANDERS FACT SHEET

SANDERS OPTIMISTIC AMID CHALLENGES ***SAYS TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES WON'T DERAIL PROGRESS, REFORMS***

In his first State of the City address since winning re-election in June, San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders tonight said the economic downturn will require San Diegans to make sacrifices for the betterment of their community, but vowed not to allow the crisis to prevent the city from moving forward.

“The problems we face now are no longer just the ones left us by our predecessors,” said Sanders. “We are grappling with a global financial crisis whose effects are felt across our land — in cities and statehouses, at businesses and nonprofits, by retired couples and young families.”

Speaking at the historic Balboa Theatre downtown, Sanders said cooperation and sacrifice will be needed to address the budget challenges confronting the city.

“Only by burying our differences and working together — citizens, unions, the business community and city government — can we emerge from this recession stronger than ever, and with a higher standard of living than we’ve ever known.”

“I intend to lead this city by crafting thoughtful, long-term solutions to our problems. They may not be easy at first, but they will ensure our strength and stability down the road.”

TACKLING EMPLOYEE PENSION COSTS

Sanders praised the hard work of city employees, from landscapers to librarians, but said he will seek concessions from them to reduce the cost of San Diego’s pension benefits. The city began formal negotiations on labor contracts with employee unions today.

“Much of what our city has accomplished over the past three years was made possible by the hard work and loyalty of our employees,” said Sanders. “Now, as we face an historic national economic crisis, we will once again look to our employees for help, knowing it won’t be easy.”

“This year, we will sit down with all five of our public-employee unions to negotiate contracts,” said Sanders. “We will be seeking long-term solutions in our retirement benefits in a manner that balances the interests of employees and taxpayers, and brings our benefits into alignment with our economic reality.”

Sanders also pledged to overcome labor union opposition to implement the voter-approved Managed Competition program, which allows the private sector to bid against city departments to provide certain public services. The program promises to ensure taxpayers receive the best value from those chosen to provide city services.

ENCOURAGING CITIZENS TO VOLUNTEER

The mayor also called on the citizens of San Diego to assume a greater role in preserving the high quality of life that’s unparalleled in the nation.

“What draws so many people here is our quality of life,” said Sanders. “Yet many view our quality of life as a birthright, rather than something that needs to be sustained through determination and even sacrifice.”

“In the coming months, I’ll be calling on San Diegans from every walk of life to come forward to help their community — to lend their energy and experience to taking care of problems close to home.”

Sanders called for the expansion of the San Diego Police Department’s Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP), which provides community patrol functions such as checking up on homes of vacationing families and directing traffic at accident scenes. Sanders said he wants to recruit more volunteers and broaden their responsibilities to address the growing problem of blight in neighborhoods suffering high foreclosure rates.

“Under my initiative, RSVP officers will monitor the condition of foreclosed and abandoned homes and work with our new city attorney and his Code Compliance Division to hold lenders accountable for maintaining these properties so they don’t degrade our neighborhoods.”

CREATING JOBS FOR SAN DIEGANS

Recognizing the need to expand San Diego’s employment base, Sanders pledged to create more jobs for the people of San Diego.

“Working with a volunteer group of civic leaders, I have identified areas that will be the focus of our job-creation strategy in the years ahead,” said Sanders. “They include attracting new employers, streamlining our permits and planning, investing in infrastructure and convincing the designers of the federal stimulus package that we deserve our fair share.”

“Each of these strategies is designed to do one thing — expand our job base to build a prosperity we all can enjoy.”

FOSTERING THE BURGEONING CLEANTECH INDUSTRY

Working with business leaders, Sanders began laying the groundwork for San Diego to become a national center for clean technology with the creation of the industry group CleanTech San Diego three years ago. The nascent industry will get a major boost from Sanders' affordable solar-power program, which will begin taking applications from residents this summer.

"Clean technology will add strength and diversity to our economy — and create jobs for San Diegans," Sanders said. "It will leverage our prized assets — our workers, our world-renowned research institutions, and access to international ports. San Diego is unique in having all this to nourish an industry in its infancy."

"In 2009, we plan to put our sunshine to work again, this time with an aggressive program that will propel San Diego to the forefront of the solar power movement," he continued. "This program, which we call San Diego CleanGeneration, will make the conversion to solar energy affordable to homeowners by financing the cost of installation and spreading it out over 20 years of property tax bills."

"We believe the market it creates will spur innovation and the same enterprising spirit that gave rise to our now-mighty biotech industry more than two decades ago," he added.

CELEBRATING A MAJOR MILESTONE FOR SAN DIEGO

Sanders took a moment to celebrate a major milestone in its fiscal recovery with yesterday's successful return to the public bond markets after a five-year shut-out. He thanked his financial team, who he said "reclaimed order from chaos and cleared a five-year backlog of crucial audits in 18 months."

"Because of their work, our bond ratings have shot up, and just yesterday we conducted our first public offering in five years. It attracted \$157 million from Wall Street investors who believe, as I do, that San Diego is once again an honest partner and a sound investment."

REORGANIZING SAN DIEGO'S REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

"One area of our city where reorganization is due is in our outside redevelopment agencies, the Southeast Economic Development Corp. and the Centre City Development Corp., which have recently undergone upheavals in their top management," said Sanders.

"In the coming year, I will bring to the City Council a plan that protects taxpayers and strengthens city oversight of redevelopment activities," added Sanders. "This is not a repudiation of our redevelopment programs, but rather a re-commitment to make them the most effective in the country."

ENSURING FULL COST RECOVERY FOR CITY SERVICES

To ensure that public fees cover city expenses, the Mayor's Office will complete a comprehensive review of fees for city services.

"Asking the public for more money — whether it's extra coins for a parking meter or a few dollars more to dump trash at a landfill — is almost always an occasion for controversy," said

Sanders. "I can't guarantee that some people won't gripe about it. But I can guarantee that the fees we receive will be used only to recover the costs of the programs they go toward."

IMPROVING THE CONVENTION CENTER AND LINDBERGH FIELD

The San Diego Convention Center and Lindbergh Field are critically important to our economy, and Sanders is pushing for improvements to both assets.

"This year, a focus of my administration we be moving forward an expansion of the San Diego Convention Center," said Sanders. "This important work will add to the value of one of the greatest economic generators any city has ever known."

"As conventioners arrive here, the first thing they see is Lindbergh Field," added Sanders. "This year we will roll out the Destination Lindbergh project, with a new inter-modal center that will bring efficiency and excitement to the harbor by redesigning our transportation network"

PROMOTING WATER CONSERVATION

Sanders also renewed his call for San Diegans to do their part to conserve water. Due to drought and unfavorable judicial rulings, the future of San Diego's water supply is in jeopardy, which threatens our quality of life and economic future.

"While thousands of San Diegans have taken the message of conservation to heart, many ignored it, hoping to get a free ride on the conservation of their neighbors," said Sanders. "Time is running out. Each of us must accept responsibility for our own water use — because the cost of doing anything less will soon be very real."

EXAMINING A NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY PLAN

Sanders pledged to fully vet a new proposal that could lead to the creation of a new Central Library downtown.

For years, community leaders have championed a library paid for by private donations, grants and redevelopment funds, but funding fell short of projected costs. Last month, the San Diego Unified School District approached the city about using two floors of the new building for a 300-student high school. The funding provided by the school district for those two floors could close the funding gap and enable the library to move forward.

"Anyone who believes in libraries also knows their importance to a major city — not as monuments to civic pride, but as doors to education and opportunity," said Sanders. [The school district proposal] is a concept that deserves a full and fair hearing, but it is an opportunity, not a done deal. Our intention was always to build a new Central Library without using General Fund monies. Given the state of our General Fund, we can not afford to change course, or take on responsibilities that will unduly burden future city budgets."

EXPRESSING HOPE FOR SAN DIEGO'S FUTURE

Even with the nation in a deep recession and unprecedented strain on the city's budget, Sanders reminded his fellow citizens of all his administration has accomplished in three years and expressed his faith that San Diego will emerge from this economic crisis stronger than ever.

"Each day brings us closer to becoming the kind of city we want our children to grow up in — a city with a new spirit of cooperation and responsibility, a city built on an economy that is durable and diverse — and where everyone shares in our prosperity," Sanders said.

"Together, we can become that city and look back with pride on the work we began here tonight."

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